



Superior Court of California County of Riverside

4050 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501

MEDIA ADVISORY

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(electronic version available at:

<http://riverside.courts.ca.gov/newsmedia/newsmedia.htm>)

NEW CIVIL FEE AND TRAFFIC FINE STRUCTURE TO TAKE EFFECT

Revenue Will Help Improve Courthouses

RIVERSIDE COUNTY: A new fee structure will go into effect starting January 1, 2009, for civil filings, as well as increased penalties and new assessments for traffic tickets and all other criminal convictions as a result of legislation approved by the Legislature and signed into law by the Governor earlier this year.

Under the new fee structure, the filing fee for "unlimited" civil cases (more than \$25,000 at issue) will go to \$365 from \$335 while the typical cost of traffic tickets will increase by \$35. An additional \$30 will be due upon conviction of any misdemeanor or felony.

The increases were authorized as part of Senate Bill (SB) 1407, which authorizes a \$5 billion capital outlay program to fund repairs, renovations, and replacement of court facilities in order to make them safer and more secure. As under current law, adjustments can be made to fees and fines to accommodate hardship cases and to guarantee access to justice. In addition, in certain criminal cases, the fees, penalties, and assessments can be converted to community service upon a showing that the total fine would impose a hardship on a defendant or his or her family.

"Enactment of this bill demonstrates the commitment by the Legislature and the Governor to ensuring that the judicial branch has the tools and resources to address one of the judicial branch's key priorities: repairing and rebuilding our crumbling courthouse infrastructure," said William C. Vickrey, Administrative Director of the Courts. The Judicial Council has identified 69 courthouse projects in "immediate and critical need" and voted in October to recommend funding for 41 of those projects through SB 1407, he said. Presiding Judge Richard T. Fields noted that Riverside County would directly benefit, with a new juvenile and family courthouse in Indio and an addition to the Hemet Courthouse.

In addition to the \$30 fee increase for unlimited civil case filings, the filing fee for limited civil cases will increase by \$25 where the amount at issue is \$10,000 to \$25,000 and by \$20 where the amount at issue is \$10,000 or less.

Traffic tickets paid on or after January 1 will carry an additional \$35 assessment and an increased court construction penalty. The fee to process a request to attend traffic school and keep the ticket off the driver's record will be \$54 beginning January 1, up from \$29. The fee for proof-of-correction citations, or "fix-it" tickets, will go from \$10 per citation to \$25 per violation. Fines imposed upon convictions of misdemeanors or felonies on or after January 1 will result in an additional \$30 assessment.

In California, 90 percent of court facilities need improvement, 78 percent are not fully accessible to disabled persons, and 68 percent lack security adequate for the design of the facility. The increased fees, penalties, and assessments authorized by SB 1407 will generate an estimated \$280 million annually to support court facility improvements.

Governance of local courthouses shifted from the counties to the state with the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002. As a result of the Act, the state, through the Judicial Council and the Administrative Office of the Courts' (AOC's) Office of Court Construction and Management, began assuming responsibility for the operation, maintenance, renovation, and construction of local court facilities.

The Fee Schedule that will take effect January 1, 2009, can be accessed at the court's website at <http://riverside.courts.ca.gov/> and will also be available at the court's various clerk's offices. A schedule of the criminal and traffic fees, assessments, and penalties can also be obtained at the clerk's office.

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